

Kaiserslautern Army libraries launch OpKid in Europe

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – Libraries in the U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern were the first in Europe to mobilize in support of Operation Kid Comfort.

A non-profit organization operating throughout the United States, OpKid creates comfort quilts and pillows for children of deployed service members.

“I’m so happy to see OpKid making its way around the world,” said Ann Flaherty, who founded the organization more than three years ago at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Shawn Friend-Begin, USAG Kaiserslautern’s supervisory librarian, is responsible for bringing OpKid to the Kaiserslautern community. He said he saw its benefits after reading about the program in the “Norwich University Record.”

“It’s my hope that a quilting association or individual quilters will take up a needle and thread to make a difference in a child’s life,” Friend-Begin said.

It’s not the stitches that make these quilts impressive, though; it’s the photographs of the deployed parent and family members, said Linda Pride. The manager of Kaiserslautern’s Kleber library, Pride recently made an OpKid quilt for six-year old Shannon Tiedemann, whose father is on a year-long deployment to Kuwait.

“This is my daddy in Legoland—in Paris—in a cave—ah, I forgot,” said Tiedemann describing some of the photos on the quilt she received as a gift from Pride.

Picking out the photos for the quilt was quite a challenge said Shannon’s mother, Regina Tiedemann.



Regina Tiedemann, U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern Child and Youth Services Health specialist, congratulates her daughter, Shannon, 6, for being the first child in Europe to receive an Operation Kid Comfort quilt Jan. 8 at the garrison’s library on Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. Operation Kid Comfort is a nationwide, non-profit organization that creates comfort quilts and pillows for children of deployed service members.

“It was hard to find pictures with just Dave [Tiedemann] and the kids in it because he’s usually the one taking the photos,” she said. Those who are interested in starting up OpKid in their communities are encouraged to request information from Friend-Begin at DSN: 486-8811 or Pride at DSN: 483-7740. Additional information about OpKid is available at <http://www.operationkidcomfort.blogspot.com>.

Information and photos provided by Christine June
U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern